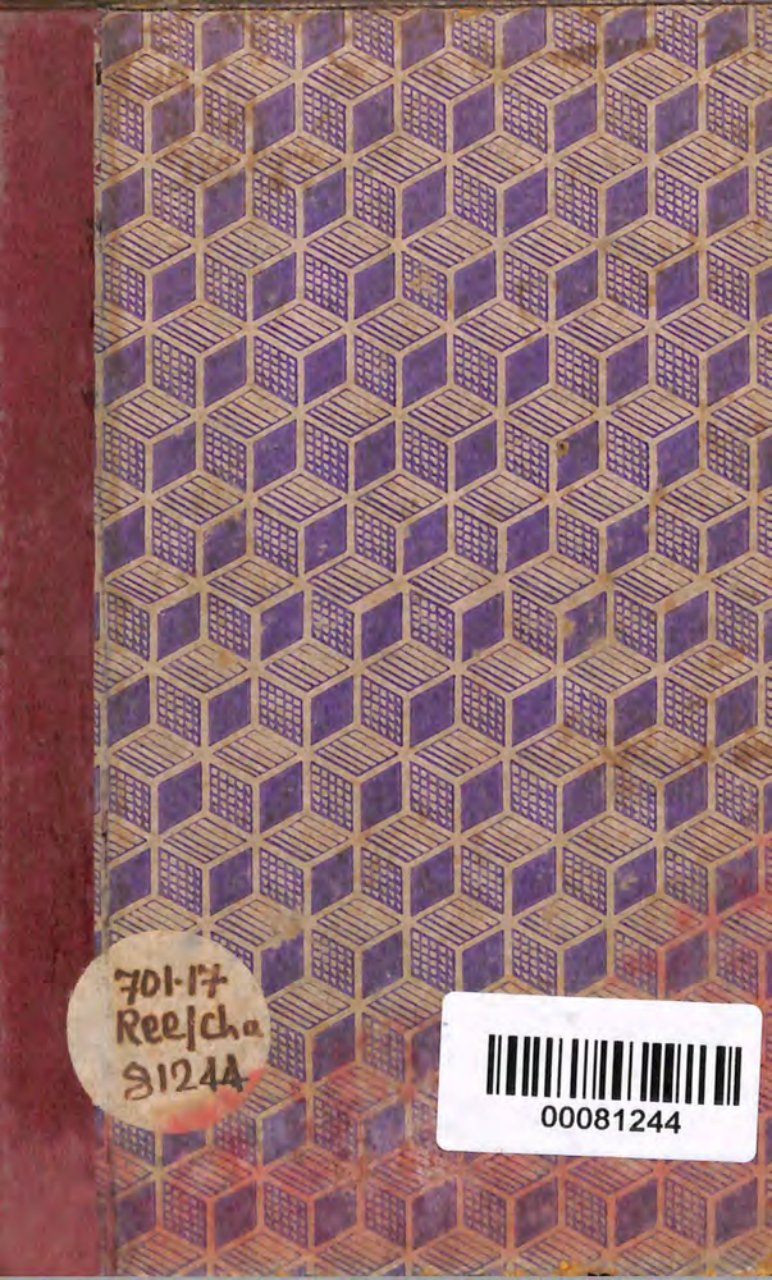
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CHARACTERISTICS

OF

PAINTERS.

BY

HENRY REEVE, ESQ.

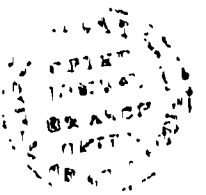
81244
ac.

"Jeder Character wird Dir ein eigenes Gemahlde seyn, und Du wirst eine herrliche Gallerie von Bildnissen zum Spiegel Deines Geistes um Dich her versammelt haben."

Tieck's Phantasien.

Se.
7

SECOND EDITION.



LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

M.DCCC.XLII.

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THESE compositions were first written down as a kind of sport in art, to describe the painters to whom they severally relate, by some awakened association with a favourite picture, or some general characteristic of the artist's genius. They are here preserved, because it is pleasant to connect the impression produced on the mind by a work of art with any familiar expression in language which the mind may chance to have retained.

Some of these little sketches have become more serious than the design which prompted them: in some perhaps the tone of criticism has deadened the lively flow of sentiment which they were meant to convey: I am content if in any of them the Idea *of the great works and minds of Artists has been partially approached.*

This little Volume was privately printed two years

ago, and circulated amongst those of his friends in whose thoughts the author might claim some place, when they chanced to return to the works of the masters which are here described: and to their indulgence at such times he then commended it. It is now addressed to a somewhat wider class of readers, if books of such slender pretentension are read by any class; but he still pleases himself with the thought, that it may chance to win the favour of a stranger's eye, by reviving some reminiscences of a beauty in art far above its own.

London, January 1842.

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DRAWING BY GIOTTO,

DATED 1315.

Credette Cimabue nella pittura
Tener lo campo; ed ora ha Giotto il grido,
Si che la fama di colui s' oscura.

Dante, Purg. xi. 97.

O'ER these faint lines perchance did Dante bend,
And watch'd the pencil of his solemn friend;
Smiled in his sacred musings as he saw
New forms conceived in love, evoked in awe,
Such as in visions he himself had known—
Giotto's the lines—the spirit was his own.

FRA ANGELICO DA FIESOLE.

Dum visibiliter Deum cognoscimus, per hunc in invisibilium amorem rapiamur, cogitando scilicet apparentes has pulchritudines arcanorum esse decorum effigies.

Corderius, in Dionys. Areop.

WHENEVER Angels wore a Saint's disguise,
And heavenly love look'd forth from human eyes,
The hood which half conceal'd the ecstatic face—
Adoring image of eternal grace—
Allow'd the bright unearthly hair to fall
In curls of softness so angelical,
That all who marvell'd at the sight divine
Knew 'twas some Seraph, or a work of thine.

Graphide.

PIETRO PERUGINO.

Sacrifico laudem Sanctificatori meo, quoniam pulchra trajecta per animas in manus artificiosas ab illâ pulchritudine veniunt quæ super animas est, cui suspirat anima mea die ac nocte.

Sanct. Augustin. Confess. x. 34.

How calm and beautiful, when Art was young,
The Seraph-sisters o'er the Painter hung,
Ere his deep power was strain'd by passions rude,
Or scatter'd in delicious lassitude!
Pure as the lily in her own long hands,
Bent like some humbler flower, the Virgin stands,
Whilst by the grace which from her forehead shone
The Church made Art's great progeny its own.

FRANCESCO FRANCIA.

THE golden casket and the chisell'd bowl
Were no fit tasks for that religious soul;
For he was of the nobler brotherhood,
Whose colours have the touch of time withstood.
None ever traced so well that finest grief
Which e'en from Angels' bosoms sought relief,
Or better limn'd that pale majestic face
Whose death-pang was salvation to our race.

FRA BARTOLOMEO DI SAN MARCO.

Antonio. Meint ihr, dass unsre Kunst so viel vermag?
Silvestro. Sie ist die schöne Brücke, Regenbogen
Die zwischen Erd' und Himmel ausgespannt ist.
Antonio. Das ist die Religion.

Correggio, von Œhlenschläger.

By gnawing fasts, by vigils kept apart,
The Monk subdued the blandishments of Art,
Lest he should lend the transient grace of Earth
To the pure Mother of her Maker's birth.
Yet cherubs linger o'er the sad abode,
And penance' self reserves a smile for God:
Till Art in beatific visions saw
Those forms which congregate in Love and awe
Around the Virgin's high and holy throne,
And Faith look'd up entranced, and knew her own.

THE TWO ANGELS.

Adam! I therefore came: nor art thou such
Created, or such place hast here to dwell,
As may not oft invite, though Spirits of Heaven,
To visit thee.

Parad. Lost, book v.

THE two Archangels who have thrones above,
The one as Lord of Power, the one of Love,
In their great service from Creation's birth,
Have been the watchers and the friends of Earth,
To hurl the Dragon from his guilty seat,
To make the breath of life more wise and sweet;
And thus when Art was deckt by hands divine,
Power still was Michael's gift—Love, Raphael, thine!

MICHAEL ANGELO BUONAROTTI.

Ἐν ανδρων, ἐν θεων γενος· εκ
Μιας δε πνεομεν
Ματρος αμφοτέροι.
Διειργει δε πασα κεκριμενα
Δυναμις—
αλλα τι προσφερομεν
Εμπαν, η μεγαν νοον η-
τοι φυσιν, αθανατοις.

Pindar, Nem. vi.

He ranged the Host of Heaven: the Seraphim
Oped the bright eye and stretch'd the sturdy limb;
Man stood majestic in the strength of years,
And woman's beauty shone undimm'd by tears;
With Heaven's high valour on the strenuous brow,
With power to conquer fiends, whose frauds they know,
He form'd the Angel-warriors for such strife,—
God saw the work was good, and gave them life.

SEBASTIAN DEL PIOMBO.

Sa mâle peinture
Fit des hommes vivans comme en fait la nature.

Antony Deschamps.

UNLIKE the Master whose divinest power
Made Nature mightier than she was before,
He rose but to the manliest part of Man,
View'd Life and Truth in their historic span,
Not nursed by fancies which the heart believes,
But taught by actions which the head achieves.

Till in that work of both those gifted hands
Joint form of what the Lord of Life commands,
The Dead awaken—Lazarus comes forth—
Man splits the prison of the yawning earth,
Struck by the Word in that tremendous strife
'Twixt conquer'd Death and the victorious Life.

RAFFAELLE.

Rapt with the rage of mine own ravisht thought,
Through contemplation of these goodly sights,
And glorious images in Heaven wrought,
Whose wondrous beautie, breathing sweet delights,
Doth kindle love in high conceipted sprights,
I fain to tell the things that I behold,
But feel my wits to faile and tongue to fold.

Spenser, Hymn of Heavenly Beautie.

A MOTHER'S beauty when her babe is waking,
That babe's soft limbs from noonday slumber breaking,
The angelic smile that ripples woman's face,
And the delicious glow of youthful grace,
Wrought in the fondest harmony of art,
Were his least gifts,—his fine terrestrial part.

Mother of Christ! devoutly dignified,
Clasp, clasp thine awful Babe in tender pride;
Whilst cherubs hovering in the azure blaze
Bend on his face the rapture of their gaze.
Such mystic splendours shook the Holy Mount,
Such streams of glory shot from Mercy's fount,
When God's great Saints descended from above,
And Man was all transfigured into Love.

LEONARDO DA VINCI.

I judge him of a rectified spirit,
In his bright reason's influence, refined
Above the tartarous moods of common men;
Bearing the nature and similitude
Of a right heavenly body; most serene
In fashion and collection of himself;
And then as clear and confident as Jove.

Ben Jonson, Poetaster.

He swept away all chilling clouds from sense,
Love burn'd more sacred, wisdom more intense;
And each pure image mystically caught
The subtle light of some eternal thought.

The richest bloom upon those features lies,
Dimpled and arch'd with woman's courtesies;
Soft music still, methinks, is whispering there,
As if Religion spread from one so fair.
That dovelike sweetness, knit to reason's power,
Bade the sage listen and the saint adore,
When the good Saviour brake the food he blest,
Though Hell grew human in the Traitor's breast,
And the serene expectance of his eye
Weigh'd Man's dread question, 'Master! is it I?'

CORREGGIO.

Shadows are moving light;
And is there aught so moving as is this?

Drummond of Hawthornden.

O'ER rounded shapes a star of love is glowing
In radiance through transparent shadows flowing;
The world's night-textured curtain, dim and dun,
Is melted by a light before the Sun,—
That light of all the earth, that healing splendour
So white and heavenly, yet so soft and tender;
The woodland Penitent, who musing lay,
Felt the sweet glory melt her sins away;
And holy transport radiates through the gloom
Which thicken'd round the mystery of the Tomb.
Or Venus, rainbow-wing'd, with sportive joy,
Smiles showers of bliss upon her darling boy,
Where the green depth of Art's enchanting grove
Hides the forsaken shrine of Pagan love.

ANDREA DEL SARTO.

If there was one who felt the blessed ties
Which link the souls of human families,
'Twas he who group'd in such endearing beauty
Affection kneeling at the feet of Duty;
Bade Charity caress her cherub-sons,
And drew her heart to those adopted ones;
Show'd Abraham mourning with a father's grief
O'er the dear victim of his great belief;
And circled round the infant from above
With sainted companies of mortal love.

DOMENICHINO.

Must you have my picture? But, indeed,
If ever I would have mine drawn to the life,
I would have a painter steal it at such time
I were devoutly kneeling at my prayers;
There is then a heavenly beauty in 't—the soul
Moves in the superficies.

Old Play.

O'ER the calm mirror, whose cœrulean breast
Might float a spirit in her charmed nest,
The Heavens drop sweetness, and their fragrant rain
Wakes Eden's garden into bloom again.
That Muse has Angels for her audience,
Who hover on the harp-notes' sweet suspense;
Unearthly passion gems that Sibyl-eye,
In which dark spells and hot affections lie;
And John's pure gaze, in Heaven's own light sublime,
Rifts the great veil that curtains Man in Time.

GIORGIONE.

Love-bless'd Leander was with love so fill'd,
That love to all that touch'd him he instill'd;
And as the colour of all things we see
To our sight's powers communicated be,
So to all objects that in compass came
Of any sense he had, his sense's flame
Flow'd from all parts, with force so virtual
It fired with sense things more insensual.

Marlowe, Hero and Leander.

A GLOBE of tinted opal was his world,
Round which the heat of fragrant vapours curl'd;
He dream'd of Life,—a gorgeous holiday,
With women born to queen it in the May,
And men enamour'd to such perfect fire,
As made their heart-strings tremble with desire.
Ah! he who dream'd that world, in sadness dies!
The snake still haunts the meads of Paradise,
And that voluptuous soul the pang must prove
Of Envy's venom on the flowers of Love.

PAOLO VERONESE.

Most potent, grave, and reverend Signors!

Othello.

In mitred state and sacred linen fold,
With hood and tunic wrought in cloth of gold,
Saint, pontiff, noble in the gauds of power
Record the legend of an humbler hour;
But in the midst some simple form divine
Marks the pure Godhead of that gorgeous shrine.

TITIAN.

> How this grace
> Speaks his own standing! what a mental power
> This eye shoots forth! how big imagination
> Moves in this lip! to the dumbness of the gesture
> One might interpret!
>
> *Timon of Athens.*

How deep the firmament's eternal blue!
How fair and fruitful is the landscape's hue!
In power and passion here the Indian boy,
Drawn by hot leopards, rushes on his joy;
Here woman, robed in her Venetian charms,
Tempts some huge soul to banquet in her arms:
Or should the dignity of saint and sage
Demand a mould for Truth or reverend Age,
On the full brow he thrones the power of Jove,
And honies o'er the lips with Christian love.
To these great tasks a patriarch's life was given,
And his own Angels beckon'd him to Heaven.

ALBRECHT DÜRER.

Nascenti homini omnifaria semina et omnigenæ vitæ germina indidit Pater: quæ quisque excoluerit illa adolescent, et fructus suos ferent in illo: si vegetalia, planta fiet: si sensualia, obrutescit: si rationalia, cœleste evadit animal: si intellectualia, Angelus erit et Dei filius.

Pico di Mirandola.

Good Albrecht Dürer! I have not the heart
To hide thy name in any trick or art.
Thou cunning workman of a thousand shapes,
Knights, virgins, ghostly men and grinning apes!
Thou dreamer of imperishable dreams!
When Melancholy dozed by Lethe's streams;
When his lean jennet bore Sir Death along
Through bosky dells, by castles high and strong,
What mystical and self-consuming sadness,
Mix'd with a gleam of visionary madness,
Chequer'd the kindest soul which ever smiled,
In the high moods of Genius' busy child!

GIULIO ROMANO.

Mox etiam agrestes Satyros nudavit, et asper
Incolumi gravitate jocum tentavit: eo quod
Illecebris erat et gratâ novitate morandus
Spectator, functusque sacris, et potus, et exlex.

Horace.

LET loose thy Gods, oh Roman!—Fauns uncouth,
And a mad crew of vintage-girdled youth,
With their licentious loves: the Bromian lair
Burns in a torrent of voluptuous air.
But Venus, leaning from her dove-drawn car,
To press the sinews of the God of War,
Or Perseus on his own heroic steed,
Lend their old beauty to the outworn creed,
As if the charm of some magician's wand
Had given fantastic life to all the band.

THE CARACCI.

THERE grew three buds upon the self-same tree,
Different as things alike at heart could be:
Sweet Louis, like a green and scented spray,
In pleasant haunts with summer winds would play;
Augustine blossom'd like the passion-flower—
Pale rose with purple symbols sadden'd o'er;
Whilst Annibal shot up to larger boughs,
On which a cluster of rich fruitage grows.

ALBANO.

They came: sweet music usher'd the odorous way,
And wanton air in twenty sweet forms danced
After her fingers; beauty and love advanced
Their ensigns in the downless rosy faces
Of youths and maids, led after by the Graces.

Chapman (completion of Marlowe's Hero and Leander).

Launch thy gay pinnace in the noonday beam,
Let flutes breathe clear o'er Cydnus' crisped stream;
The Oreads, scarfed in rainbow zones, are fann'd
By the warm zephyr of this faery-land;
Earth gleams with flowers, the air with butterflies,—
'Tis a gay fable, and like fable dies.

MICHAEL ANGELO CARAVAGGIO.

Our haughty Life is crown'd with Darkness.

Wordsworth.

Is this a Judith, Painter, that I see?
Each woman is a Judith unto thee:
The warlike mail of shadow on the breast,
The full swart limbs, the dusky-folded vest.
And the high profile, blanch'd with passion's flood,
Belong to Beauty in a guilty mood.

GUIDO RENI.

Guido ist eigentlich der Mahler der Seele.

Schelling.

FAIR as the soul which never dream'd of ill,
Strong as the presencé of a virtuous will,
In the white chambers of these downy breasts
The chastest energy of Woman rests:
In these slight lines of infant innocence
Dwells human beauty undisturb'd by sense;
In these last pangs hęroic limbs endure
The spirit triumphs and the heart is pure.

SALVATOR ROSA.

—Questa selva selvaggia ed aspra e forte
Che nel pensier rinuova la paura.

Dante.

THE sylvan painter from some tangled cave,
Where feathering larches through the rock-clefts wave,
On summer days would watch the clouds that sail
With milky bosoms on the southern gale:
Or bade fierce winds in Ocean chasms arise
Which rock'd the boughs with fitful harmonies,
Shatter'd the crests of mighty groves, and rent
The glorious earth with that bold element.
Art, like a wood-nymph, passionate and free,
Went out to summer 'neath the greenwood tree,
When that dear son (enrich'd with arts and wit
To know mankind and make a friend of it)
Laugh'd at the gilded lies of life, and stray'd
To the cool depths of mountain ambuscade.

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CLAUDE LORRAINE.

Vedi il sole che 'n fronte ti riluce;
Vedi l' erbetta, i fiori e gli arboscelli
Che quella terra sol da se produce.

Dante, Purg. xxvii. 136.

The calm of moonlight and the pomp of day
Blend with the aery sunbeams on their way,
To wave in paths of gold on summer seas,
Smile o'er the earth and sweep the feathery trees.
The ridge of distant mountains, blue and bare,
Kisses in light the denser depth of air;
And clouds of incense, sea-born strangers, fly
On the clear breeze of that enchanted sky.

NICOLAS POUSSIN.

The pipe of Pan, to shepherds
Couch'd in the shadow of Mænalian pines,
Was passing sweet; the eyeballs of the leopards
That in high triumph drew the Lord of Vines,
How did they sparkle to the cymbal's clang!
While Fauns and Satyrs beat the ground
In cadence, and Silenus swang
This way and that, with wild flowers crown'd.

Wordsworth.

O'ER the red earth the dog-star darts his beams,
The sullen clouds are lull'd in azure gleams,
The sons of fable in their lusty dance
Turn the gay nymphs and poise the vine-wreath'd lance,
And youths and maidens 'neath the tented trees
Wait the cool summons of the freshening breeze.

GASPAR POUSSIN.

He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountains in a noonday grove,
And you must love him, ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.
The outward shows of sky and earth,
Of hill and valley, he has view'd,
And impulses of deeper birth
Have come to him in solitude.

Wordsworth.

If I could wander where a true sun shines,
To Grézy Vaudan or thy Apennines,
Companionable Artist! thou shouldst chuse
A summer pleasaunce for the happy Muse,
Near some fair city, or the ruin'd fanes
Of the old Gods, the genii of those plains.

Charm'd by the witchery of the vernal air
The sight would revel in a world so fair,
Crest the bold headland, search the dipping glades,
Watch the faint sea-line o'er the glossy shades:
The sunshine dripping through the dense green boughs
Would bathe the painted banks; and we 'd arouse
A choir of Dian's nymphs from yonder brake,
To dance around thee for thy kinsman's sake.

RUBENS.

I have been from my childhood alway of a rumorous and stormy nature.

Martin Luther.

THESE florid limbs the soul of passion fills,
Strength in desire through every muscle thrills;
A world of moving colour round him flies,
Like showers and sunshine in his breezy skies.
The Wind-God and the Sea-God shout aloud,
And urge the tempests on their fins of cloud;
In wild contortions Frenzy, Guilt, Despair,
Are hurl'd across the battlements of air;
But children all unswathed in summer bowers
Guard luscious fruits and sport with twisted flowers.

REMBRANDT.

Come a raggio di sol che puro mei
Per fratta nube, già prato di fiori
Vider coperti d'ombra gli occhi miei;
Vid' io così più turbe di splendori
Fulgurati di su di raggi ardenti
Senza veder principio di fulgori.

Dante, Parad. xxiii. 34.

From murky pits the fiery vapours rise,
Which flare in orange meteors o'er the skies;
The vault of Heaven is strewn with clouds in flight,
The chasing whirlwinds urge the dreadful fight;
Terror sits brooding o'er the forest's gloom,
Above, a hell of light,—below, a tomb.

Shed all thy snow-white shafts of light, O Day!
Night! spread thy tent of bistre and of grey;
That Hope and Life, suffused in one bright star,
May, like good planets, send their beams to war
With all the gloom that age, or grief, or death
Can fling across the upward ways of Faith.

RUYSDAEL.

There is something of softness, not unallied to sorrow, in these mild winter days and their humid sunshine.

Landor.

GREY river! down the mountain stepping-stones
From piny glens above thy torrent moans;
Bare are the stems of fir which winter's blast
(Scarce spent as yet) across the crags has cast;
Thick atmospheres and sullen evergreen
Hang their dense curtain round the sober scene.
O uninhabitable wilderness!
O home for discontent or shy distress!
The Artist loved thy sternly sadden'd air,
Yet scarce a human image placed he there.

ALBERT CUYP.

Ergo tua rura manebunt
Et tibi magna satis; quamvis lapis omnia nudus,
Limosoque palus obducat pascua junco.

Virgil.

The moisten'd lowlands, delicately clear,
Through the thin haze and morning gleam appear;
On the smooth herbage cattle graze or sleep,
The neatherds by the rushy streamlet keep
Their quiet watch, until the day expire,
And slanting sunbeams gild the village spire.

WOUVERMANS.

They will tell you by rote where services were done; at such and such a sconce, at such a breach, at such a convoy; who came off bravely, who was shot, who disgraced, what terms the enemy stood on, and this they con perfectly in the phrase of war.

Henry V.

The tucket sounds: dash on, thou Flemish grey!
Speed, bold Walloon, to join the gathering fray!
The skirmish reeks to heaven; a tawny cloud
Wraps the hot combat in its frightful shroud;
In mortal battle struggling for the van,
Horse rolls on horse, and man must slaughter man.

81244

VANDYKE, REYNOLDS, AND TITIAN.

(A SAYING OF NORTHCOTE.)

> At least thy pictures look a voice, and we
> Imagine sounds, deceived to that degree,
> We think 't is somewhat more than just to see.
>
> *Dryden.*

VANDYKE upon his faithful canvass spread
The pictured portrait of the mighty dead;
Reynolds the graces of his age revives,
And in his magic glass their image lives;
But Titian's portraits, eloquently clear,
Are living men,—they think, they speak, they hear.

MORALÈS.

Tra me si va nella città dolente.

Dante.

KNOW ye that haughtier and severer land,
Where Art was led by Philip's marble hand,
Through laurel groves and crypts of sacred dread,
Where torches flash upon the palaced dead?
There he surnamed Divine—divine in woe,
Bade all the mysteries of torture glow;
In trickling gore the writhing Saint he bathed,
In robes of black th' ecstatic martyr swathed,
He made the Cross of Jesus more austere,
And drew Devotion in the garb of Fear.

VELASQUEZ.

He had perceived the presence and the power
Of greatness; and deep feeling had impress'd
Great objects on his mind, with portraiture
And colour so distinct, that on his mind
They lay like substances, and almost seem'd
To haunt the bodily sense.

Wordsworth.

Yet there some gallant, stately as the Cid,
Springs from the canvass, if the Master bid;
Waves the tower'd standard of Castille again,
And checks his charger with a soldier's rein.
Yet there some visage, tried in cunning strife,
Hides the shrewd secret of a statesman's life;
Yet there some monarch in his knighthood stands,
Spurns the low earth and half that earth commands.

MURILLO.

Vidi a voi, Donna, portare
Ghirlandetta di fior gentile,
E sovra lei vidi volare
Angiolel d'Amore umile,
E nel suo cantar sottile
Diceva: Chi mi vedrà
Lauderà il mio Signore.

Dante.

THERE too the cheerful Andalusian drew
In melting colour all his fancy knew:
No solemn saints, nor forms of glorious youth
In the high stature of eternal Truth,
But, buoy'd on incense, sportive cherubs rode,
Toss'd up their arms and round the maiden crow'd.
Some village maiden lent the Virgin's face
Its sprightly coyness and its simple grace,
Some rustic girl who scarce an hour before
With those dark urchins frolick'd by the door.
All natural graces in their forms abide,—
But natural graces all beatified.

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